

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method, comprising:
 - initializing a media device during a pre-boot phase of a computer system;
 - reading a description of content stored on a self-describing media by firmware of the computer system during the pre-boot phase, the self-describing media coupled to the media device;
 - extracting a first portion of the content by the firmware to enable the firmware to recognize a second portion of the content; and
 - accessing the second portion of the content by the firmware.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein extracting the first portion of the content comprises launching a pre-boot recovery utility extracted from the first portion of content to recover a storage device of the computer system.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein the pre-boot recovery utility is an Extensible Firmware Interface (EFI) application.
4. The method of claim 2 wherein accessing the second portion of the content comprises writing a portion of the second portion of the content to the storage device using the pre-boot recovery utility.

5. The method of claim 2 wherein the storage device includes a magnetic hard disk.
6. The method of claim 2 wherein the media device includes a magnetic tape drive and the self-describing media includes a magnetic tape.
7. The method of claim 6, further comprising recovering an operating system boot target stored on a storage device of the computer system from the magnetic tape using the pre-boot recovery utility during the pre-boot phase.
8. The method of claim 1 wherein extracting the first portion of the content comprises:
 - launching a file system driver stored in the first portion of the content; and
 - mounting a file system on the computer system based on the file system driver.
9. The method of claim 8 wherein the file system driver to operate in accordance with the EFI framework standard.
10. The method of claim 8 wherein accessing the second portion of the content comprises accessing the second portion of the content by the firmware via the file system during the pre-boot phase.

11. The method of claim 8, further comprising mounting a known file system on the computer system if the firmware recognizes the second portion of the content.
12. The method of claim 11 wherein the known file system is stored in the firmware.
13. An article of manufacture comprising:
 - a machine-readable medium including a plurality of instructions which when executed perform operations comprising:
 - initializing a media device during a pre-boot phase of a computer system;
 - reading a file system header stored on a self-describing media accessed by the media device during the pre-boot phase, the file system header describing information to enable the computer system to recognize media data stored on the self-describing media;
 - extracting the information from the self-describing media to recognize the media data; and
 - accessing the media data stored on the self-describing media.
14. The article of manufacture of claim 13 wherein initializing the media device comprises layering an Input/Output interface onto an Input/Output access to the media device.

15. The article of manufacture of claim 13 wherein extracting the information from the self-describing media comprises launching a pre-boot recovery utility described by the file system header to recover a storage device of the computer system from the media data during the pre-boot phase.

16. The article of manufacture of claim 15 wherein the pre-boot recovery utility is an EFI application.

17. The article of manufacture of claim 15 wherein accessing the media data comprises writing a portion of the media data from the self-describing media to the storage device using the pre-boot recovery utility.

18. The article of manufacture of claim 13 wherein extracting the information from the self-describing media comprises:

launching a file system driver stored on the self-describing media during the pre-boot phase, the file system driver described by the file system header; and

mounting a file system on the computer system based on the file system driver during the pre-boot phase, the file system to enable the computer system to read the media data stored on the self-describing media.

19. The article of manufacture of claim 18 wherein the file system driver to operate in accordance with the EFI framework standard.

20. The article of manufacture of claim 18 wherein execution of the plurality of instructions further perform operations comprising mounting a known file system on the computer system if the computer system recognizes the media data.

21. A computer system, comprising:

a processor; and

at least one flash device operatively coupled to the processor, the at least one flash device including firmware instructions which when executed by the processor perform operations comprising:

initializing a media device during a pre-boot phase of a computer system;

reading a file system header stored on a self-describing media coupled to the media device during the pre-boot phase, the file system header indicating the location of information to enable the firmware to recognize media data stored on the self-describing media;

extracting the information from the self-describing media to recognize the media data; and

accessing the media data stored on the self-describing media using the extracted information.

22. The computer system of claim 21 wherein extracting the information from the self-describing media comprises launching a pre-boot recovery utility located via the file system header to recover a storage device of the computer system from the media data during the pre-boot phase.

23. The computer system of claim 22 wherein execution of the plurality of instructions further perform operations comprising recovering a corrupted operating system boot target stored on the storage device using the pre-boot recovery utility, wherein the self-describing media includes a magnetic backup tape.

24. The computer system of claim 21 wherein extracting the information from the self-describing media comprises:

launching a file system driver stored on the self-describing media, wherein the file system driver located via by the file system header; and

mounting a file system on the computer system based on the file system driver, the file system to enable firmware of the computer system to read the media data.

25. The computer system of claim 21 wherein the firmware to operate in accordance with an Extensible Firmware Interface (EFI) framework standard.